



# Fifth Program Year CAPER

The CPMP Fifth Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report includes Narrative Responses to CAPER questions that CDBG, HOME, HOPWA, and ESG grantees must respond to each year in order to be compliant with the Consolidated Planning Regulations. The Executive Summary narratives are optional.

The grantee must submit an updated Financial Summary Report (PR26).

## GENERAL

In Fiscal Year 2009/2010, the City of Casper received \$440,491 in Community Development Block Grant funds (CDBG) from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The City reprogrammed \$173,380 of the previous year's CDBG funds and received \$78,566.35 in program income. The total amount of CDBG funds available to the City for FY 2009/2010 was \$692,437. The following is a synopsis of accomplishments achieved using CDBG funds:

- 265 elderly and disabled persons in the community received Casper Area Transportation Coalition (CATC) tickets for transportation to medical, educational, recreational, and employment destinations.
- Homeless persons received tickets for CATC transportation to medical facilities or social service agencies in the community.
- The fixed route transit system continues to be a primary community amenity by providing a total of 125,549 rides on The Bus and 54,213 rides on the Casper Area Transportation Coalition dial-a-ride service.
- The City completed its 407th house through the World Changers Program. A total of twenty one (21) projects were completed.
- World Changers replaced windows on the R. L. Mills Home, painted and replaced windows and doors on a single-family housing unit that is a part of the Seton House Campus, constructed a ramp on Building A on the LifeSteps Campus, built a dog run at Building B (also on LifeSteps Campus) for a disabled tenant's companion, and rehabilitated the exteriors of fifteen (15) homes.
- Four (4) homeowners had emergency repairs performed on their homes to address issues that posed an immediate threat to the health and safety of the residents.
- Five (5) blighted properties were demolished.
- One hundred one (101) homeowners in low-moderate income areas were provided dumpsters or roll offs and tipping fees to clean up their houses and yards. Over 330 tons of trash and debris was removed.
- A local church sponsored two (2) neighborhood cleanup days for North Casper where CDBG funds paid for dumpsters and bale fill fees.
- Fall neighborhood cleanup efforts in Old Yellowstone District used CDBG

funds to place dumpsters throughout the neighborhood and to pay for tipping fees. Seventy seven (77) homeowners and businesses utilized the dumpsters.

- A new door was added to the 12<sup>th</sup> Street Clinic entrance on LifeSteps Campus to provide additional patient privacy and security.
- Locks were replaced on the Early Head Start program areas in the LifeSteps Campus facility.
- The City continues to manage LifeSteps Campus, a 6.5 acre, multi-building social service Campus.
- Paid one-half of salary for a code enforcement officer assigned to the “Weed and Seed” area.
- Policies and procedures for Rental Rehabilitation program were completed. The program was publicized; however, no landlords have yet taken advantage of the funding opportunity.
- Re-keyed most of LifeSteps Campus facilities to control accessibility by City staff, tenants and clients.
- Work was completed in a local assessment district in Fort Casper. Applications were taken from low-moderate income homeowners to establish a waiting list to make assessment payments on their behalf in the next fiscal year.

Funds were allocated to seven (7) projects. CDBG funds were allocated to City-sponsored projects benefiting low-moderate income persons with an emphasis on housing rehabilitation; tipping fees and dumpster costs for low-moderate income neighborhoods cleanup efforts, graffiti removal, rehabilitation activities at LifeSteps Campus and the redevelopment of the Old Yellowstone District.

CDBG leverages additional funds from other sources to make viable projects a reality. This year the Casper Area Transportation Coalition (CATC), the City’s only CDBG sub-recipient leveraged a total of \$1,374,359 from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), City of Casper, Town of Mills, Town of Evansville, Town of Bar Nunn, Natrona County and the State of Wyoming. The City contributed \$409,446 of its funds in addition to the \$81,558 of CDBG funds. FTA contributed \$714,692.

Other funds leveraged by CDBG activities are from the Wyoming Community Development Authority (WCDA) as matching funds for materials for World Changers. This year, WCDA’s contribution was \$15,216. In-kind contributions came from World Changers. Their 256 volunteer students and adults contributed 32 hours of volunteer time for an estimated value of \$81,920 (at a rate of \$10 per hour). These volunteer hours will also be used as in-kind matching for the Department of Justice (DOJ) Weed and Seed Program.

CDBG funds also are being used as matching funds for the Weed and Seed Program. CDBG funds paid for one-half of the salary of a code enforcement officer assigned to the designated Weed and Seed area. The program is funded by the DOJ in the amount of \$150,000.

## **General Questions**

The Consolidated Planning process facilitated community-wide planning efforts for the expenditure of City of Casper Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Community meetings of local service providers, educators, health care professionals, childcare operators, economic development professionals, and City of Casper Housing and Community Development staff developed eight (8) visions and supporting goals for the use of CDBG funds over the five-year period. The visions are:

- to promote, support and encourage quality childcare
- to promote and support affordable housing development efforts and preserve existing housing stock
- to promote and support programs for persons and families that are homeless
- to promote and support economic development efforts
- to promote and support programs that benefit children and youth
- to promote and support programs that assist special needs populations
- to promote and support community transit systems
- to address illegal drug issues in the community

None of the abovementioned goals are deemed any more important than the other; however, quality and quantity of childcare was raised as the number one community need.

The following report reflects outcomes and objectives achieved according to the Performance Measurements System implemented by HUD. In addition, each of the activities had to support the visions for the five year plan. It would be unusual to achieve a goal in a single fiscal year. In order to achieve the visions, most activities are multi-year in concept and implementation. The following is a description of program activities carried out, outcomes achieved, funds allocated and funds expended.

## ***SUITABLE LIVING ENVIRONMENT***

This section of the report focuses on activities that provide a suitable living environment for low-moderate income persons. The outcome of the CDBG funded activities created accessibility for the purpose of creating a suitable living environment.

### **Casper Area Transportation Coalition**

On April 18, 2005 the City celebrated one of the greatest successes of the last Five Year Consolidated Plan process -- the initiation of a community-wide transit system called The Bus. Prior to The Bus, the City's fixed route transit system, elderly, disabled and low-income persons without personal transportation only had access to the dial-a-ride system, known as the Casper Area Transportation Coalition (CATC). The need for

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service outgrew the program's capacity. CATC required 24 hours notice for transportation requests. On days when CATC reached its capacity, riders would have to be placed on a waiting list, wait an additional day, take a costly cab ride, or rely upon friends or family to provide needed transportation.

Many of CATC's passengers did not need the "door-to-door" service. A fixed route system would meet their transportation needs. A community task group was formed, and after two years of intensive planning, The Bus became operational. Initially, The Bus operated four routes. Each route was carefully planned to provide transit services to those areas most frequented by the target population – low-moderate income persons. The routes go to major shopping, employment and medical centers in the community. Two years ago The Bus extended its service area to the western areas of Casper and in July 2009, it expanded service to the Towns of Mills, Evansville and Bar Nunn. The buses link at a transfer station located on South Beech Streets and East Collins Drive. This past fall, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds also constructed a new transfer station with shelters and streetscaping. The result is an easy transfer from one bus route to another.

In its 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (Connecting Casper, July, 2007), the City evaluated what percentage of the Casper Metropolitan Planning Area had access to the fixed route service. In the Appendices Section of this report the following maps relevant to the bus routes are found:

- Map #1 – a map of the City that identifies all of the low to moderate income areas.
- Map #2 – shows the six fixed routes in Casper.
- Map #4 – the red outline indicates the service area of the fixed routes as compared to population density. The major population concentrations are within a ¼ mile buffer – or the approximate walking distance to bus stops.
- Map #5 – using the same ¼ mile buffer zone (red outline), shows the proximity of the bus routes to major employers, shopping areas, medical and recreational areas.

If these maps were overlaid, one can conclude that the fixed route system reaches the majority of non-residential areas and provides access to a concentration of population so their "commute" to a bus stop is at or below ¼ mile, AND that the routes and bus stops are primarily located in low-moderate income neighborhoods.

CDBG funds provide ridership tickets for low-moderate income persons who need assistance to afford transportation services. Two hundred sixty four persons (264) persons received assistance with tickets for either the dial-a-ride or The Bus. Even though high gas prices in late 2008 brought more riders to The Bus, it appears that many of them chose The Bus as their preferred transportation option. In Fiscal Year 10, The Bus provided 125,549 rides as compared to 118,935 rides in Fiscal Year 09 and 103,608 rides in Fiscal Year 2008. Four years ago, The Bus provided 74,333 rides. This shows a sixty-nine percent (69%) increase over the last four years of operation. The increased ridership is due to several factors: higher acceptance by the community; expanded routes; expanded access to more services; and, high personal transportation costs. The

dial-a-ride system saw a more significant decrease over the previous year's ridership. In Fiscal Year 10, CATC provided 54,213 rides as compared to 57,285 rides in Fiscal Year 09 and 57,910 rides in Fiscal Year 08.

In this past fiscal year, the Metropolitan Planning Office (MPO) prepared its newest Transit Development and Coordination Plan. The last transit development plan was completed in 2005. A coordination plan has never been completed for The Bus and is required by the Wyoming Department of Transportation in order to receive transit funds. Using a transit consultant, the MPO and the CATC Board of Directors approved the plan and recently submitted the plan to City Council. The plan is:

- A planning document that addresses transit issues and concerns in the Casper urbanized area.
- An analysis of current transit conditions and provided recommendations for improvements in regards to transit coordination, access, services and operation.
- A guide for improving the transit services, efficiency and coordination with social service agencies around the Casper area.
- An evaluation of the fixed route and paratransit services and develops recommendations to improve the system.
- An overview of existing services, a peer review and passenger and driver surveys. Based on the existing conditions and reviews, unmet transportation needs are outlined and transit service alternatives and strategies for improvements are made.
- A financial plan that outlines capital requirements, operating cost projections and revenue assumptions. An implementation matrix has also been completed. This matrix outlines various service improvements for CATC, The Bus and coordination efforts for the next 5 years.

The MPO is facilitating the development of a transit coordination committee. The MPO has identified potential members. Duties and responsibilities will be established and the committee should be operational in the next few months.

CDBG funds have become an integral part of the funding of CATC/The Bus. This year's funding was \$81,558 for ridership tickets. The City of Casper contributed \$409,446 towards operational and needed matching funds for purchases of buses. The Federal Transit Authority (FTA) contributed \$714,692. Subsidies and direct contributions from the Towns of Mills, Evansville and Bar Nunn total of \$18,777. Advertising revenue was \$4,100. Natrona County contributed \$10,000 and the State of Wyoming contributed \$114,171. Service Contracts complete the funding picture bringing in \$21,615. Income from sources other than CDBG totals \$1,292,801.

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Outcome: Persons without personal transportation have access to affordable transportation to get to jobs, medical appointments, shopping and social events.

<u>Funds Allocated:</u>	\$ 81,558
<u>Funds Expended:</u>	\$ 81,588
<u>Matching Funds:</u>	\$ 1,292,801

### Ethnicity of Persons Served

	<i>Person</i>	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Hispanic</i>
White	233	12
Black/African American	7	
Asian	1	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	11	
Other Multi-Racial	12	
<i>Total</i>	<b>264</b>	<b>12</b>

### Income Category

	<i>Person</i>
Extremely Low	230
Low-Moderate	34
<i>Total</i>	<b>264</b>

## LifeSteps Campus

The City of Casper has managed LifeSteps Campus since November, 2006. LifeSteps Campus is a group of buildings situated on a 6.5 acre parcel of land owned by the City of Casper. Situated close to the City-owned cemetery, the State of Wyoming returned ownership of the property to the City when the State closed the Youth Treatment Center in the early 1990's. After requesting proposals, the City awarded the Casper Housing Authority the lease to establish a "one-stop shop" for persons/families that were homeless or at risk of becoming homeless for services. The Housing Authority secured grants and loans to begin the rehabilitation of the then nearly fifty year old buildings. In November 2006, the Housing Authority returned Campus management to the City. The Housing and Community Development Division assumed management responsibilities and moved its office from City Hall to the lower level of Building F on Campus. There are nine (9) buildings on the campus. Map #5 shows the physical layout of the campus and identifies the location of each building. In alphabetical order, the following is a list of current tenants and uses of the facility:



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- *Building A:* At the beginning of the fiscal year, the property was occupied by the Five Trails Adult Day Center. The program relocated and Eagle Ability Services, Inc. opened up a day rehabilitation facility for persons with developmental disabilities.
- *Building B:* This facility is the former Wilson School. It has four (4) two bedroom and four (4) one-bedroom apartments that are leased to persons earning at or below 50% of area median income. The property was initially rehabilitated with State Community Development Block Grant and Federal Home Loan Bank funds. In order to meet the funding requirements, the building must remain as affordable housing. The facility has been managed by Housing Alternatives, Inc.; however, this organization will not exist after October 31, 2010. The City is working with Wyoming Housing Network to assume management duties on or about October 1, 2010, subject to approval by the Casper City Council.
- *Building C:* The building was initially used as long term rehabilitation housing for persons discharged from the hospital with disabilities or brain injury. The building is configured for housing purposes. When the Casper Housing Authority managed the campus, the organization moved its offices to the campus into Building C.
- *Building D:* This stand-alone building provides a group home setting for women with developmental disabilities and/or acquired brain injury. The program is operated by Eagle Ability Services, Inc.
- *Building E:* This three-story building has several tenants. The top story has the 12<sup>th</sup> Street Clinic, formerly known as the Health Care for the Homeless Clinic, a program operated by the Community Action Partnership. There is a vacant space that has about 1,500 square feet. The main floor has Early Head Start and the main area of the Transitional Housing Program operated by the Community Action Partnership. The lower level has some housing, kitchen and lounge area for the transitional housing program. It also has an Evenstart Program operated by the Northwest Community Action Program (NOWCAP) and a small adult basic education/general education diploma program operated by Casper College.
- *Building F:* The living space on the main floor is now vacant. The Self Help Center moved its Turning Point, a transitional housing program for victims of domestic violence, to the former Ivy House Bed and Breakfast on South Ash Street. A portion of the lower floor is still occupied by the City's Housing and Community Development Division.
- *Building H:* This stand alone building once housed children adjudicated to residential treatment programs. When this program moved to the new Central Wyoming Counseling Center campus, the building was leased to Circle C Resources. They opened a group home for women with developmental

disabilities. Circle C closed the facility at the end of the calendar year and the facility has remained vacant since.

- *Building K:* This full commercial kitchen and dining room is available to tenants. Early Head Start uses the kitchen facility to prepare breakfasts, snacks and lunches for its children.
- *Building L:* This full sized gymnasium with a stage on it provides a place for indoor recreation for the children of Early Head Start and the Transitional Housing residents. Other tenants may also reserve the gym for gatherings.

The City worked with tenants to identify potential capital improvement projects. The 12<sup>th</sup> Street Clinic had no way to control access to the clinic exam area. They requested a new door be installed so they could not only maintain control but comply with privacy and security requirements.

As mentioned in other reports, it is unknown how many keys to the campus are in the community – keys that could give access to unauthorized persons. Thus, the City is continuing with the campus-wide re-key project. A consistent key system on the campus maintains security for tenants and their clients. The vacant buildings have not been re-keyed. When a new tenant moves in, locks will be changed.

Building A is the stand-alone building as one enters the campus. It was constructed in 1985. Ever since the City assumed management of the campus, it has been monitoring the leaking of the building's roof. Some repair steps to fix the roof were taken to prevent damage. However, it soon came to a point when the rubber membrane roof that was leaking needed to be replaced. The lack of sufficient funding did not allow for a full roof replacement. Thus new roofing was replaced around the parapets and repairs were made to some of the flat areas that appeared to be compromised. In summary, CDBG funds were allocated for three (3) capital improvement projects:

- Install a door to the patient area of the 12<sup>th</sup> Street Clinic (Health Care for Homeless program) to offer additional patient privacy and security.
- Continue re-keying areas of the campus to provide a consistent key plan and track access.
- Repair the roof of Building A.

Outcome: Keeping the rents low for the nonprofit organizations that use the Campus allows the agencies to use more of their budget funds for direct service provision. CDBG funds make it possible to do necessary capital improvements that improve the living environment of the Campus for everyone who uses it.

<u>Funds Allocated:</u>	\$20,000
<u>Funds Expended:</u>	\$12,477 (Note: \$6,780 was carried over and expended in new fiscal year.



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## Ethnicity of Persons Served

	<i>Person</i>	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Hispanic</i>
White	914	120
Black/African American	48	
Asian	0	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	10	
Other Multi-Racial	0	
<i>Total</i>	<b>972</b>	<b>120</b>

## Income Category

	<i>Person</i>
Extremely Low	963
Low-Moderate	9
<i>Total</i>	<b>972</b>

## Code Enforcement

Clean neighborhoods are the equivalent of healthy living environments. In the low-moderate income neighborhoods, many homeowners do not have the financial ability to pay for roll offs, dumpsters or tipping fees required by the landfill. Yet, a clean yard and neighborhood is important to them, too. So, once the financial issues are taken off the table, these homeowners are very happy to spend the time cleaning up their homes, yards and neighborhoods. In the course of the past year, seventy four (74) roll offs were provided to homeowners in low-moderate income areas. The assistance included pick up, delivery and tipping fees. Forty six (46) homeowners got dumpsters or roll offs as well as tipping fee assistance. A total of 330 tons of trash was removed from the neighborhood. A local church coordinated with the City's Code Enforcement officer assigned to the area for a fall neighborhood clean-up day. Another fifty five (55) neighbors participated in the event. This program is an effective and positive tool to provide tangible assistance to the neighborhoods.

This year is the third year of Department of Justice, Weed and Seed five year funding for the City of Casper. The program has had a major impact in our community. The designated Weed and Seed area includes Census Tracts 200 and 300, where more than 20% of the residents live in poverty. These same tracts are also designated low-moderate income neighborhoods. To facility the Weed and Seed efforts and using code enforcement to for both "weeding" and "seeding" efforts. The police department does the "weeding" with increased enforcement activities. "Seeding" efforts include providing tipping fees, dumpsters and targeting World Changers rehabilitation efforts in the targeted areas.

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About five years ago, Casper had one of the highest use rates of methamphetamine per capita in the country. It was not a statistic to be proud of. The Police Chief and community leaders formed a task force and the Weed and Seed program was the tool to implement action steps to change these statistics. The program has demonstrated great successes during its first two full years of operations.

- In 2005 there were 115 felony level methamphetamine cases prosecuted. The number dropped to 64 in 2009.
- In 2005 there were 185 misdemeanor level methamphetamine cases prosecuted. The number dropped to 93 in 2009.
- In 2006 there were 39 residential treatment beds available for substance abusers. In 2009 the inventory has increased to 163 beds. More than 50% of the beds are filled with court-ordered clients.
- Methamphetamine as a drug of choice has dropped 52% from 2006.
- Drug arrests have dropped from 33 drug arrests per 1,000 persons in the designated area to 25 drug arrests per 1,000 persons.

Although the methamphetamine drug problem has not been totally resolved, the above statistics indicate that the Weed and Seed effort has had a major positive impact in the community. Crime rates are decreasing in the targeted area, residents are taking pride in the appearances of their neighborhoods, and folks who need help with their drug addiction have better access to services. Together, CDBG funds, volunteer labor, stronger law enforcement and code enforcement, Department of Justice funds, and a neighborhood commitment reap such positive numbers! Our community is proud of its accomplishments in this area – the lives of the low-moderate income persons who live and work in the designated area are definitely improved.

### Ethnicity of Persons Served

	<i>Person</i>	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Hispanic</i>
White	101	11
Black/African American	7	
Asian	1	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2	
Other Multi-Racial		
<i>Total</i>	<b><i>111</i></b>	<b><i>11</i></b>

### Income Category

	<i>Person</i>
Extremely Low	
Low-Moderate	111
<i>Total</i>	<b><i>111</i></b>

Outcome: The neighborhoods are cleaner, blight is reduced and occupants have a suitable living environment.

<u>Funds Allocated:</u>	\$ 61,000
<u>Funds Expended:</u>	\$ 60,686

### **Fort Casper Local Assessment District**

Fort Casper is a low-moderate income neighborhood located just north of CY Avenue and west of South Poplar Street. The addition was built in the mid 1950's. The existing infrastructure is of an age when it must be replaced. Because of the costs, the replacement must be accomplished in phases. The first phase was completed about five (5) years ago. CDBG funds were used to pay assessments on behalf of low-moderate income homeowners. Construction on Phase II began last summer. This spring the City completed the work. However, at the date of this report, the final assessments have not yet been determined.

The Housing and Community Development Division has taken applications from income-eligible homeowners and a waiting list has been established. No CDBG funds from this fiscal year were expended. However, the funds have been carried over and combined with funds allocated from Fiscal Year 2010/2011. In total, \$150,000 will be available to pay assessments. Based upon the anticipated average assessment and the waiting list numbers, about \$65,000 of the \$150,000 would be obligated. It is anticipated that once the assessment notices are received by homeowners, more income-eligible homeowners will come forward for assistance. A full report on this project will be reported in the FY11 CAPER.

Outcome: Low-moderate income homeowners will not have extra financial hardship imposed upon them as a result of the assessment. The neighborhood will have new infrastructure that should last for many years. The new streets, curbs and gutters improve the overall appearance, safety and longevity of the neighborhood.

<u>Funds Allocated:</u>	\$ 75,000
<u>Funds Expended:</u>	\$ 00

## ***DECENT HOUSING***

### **Housing Rehabilitation Assistance Program**

Typically, the most affordable housing in Casper is located in the central core of town. Other affordable housing can be found in portions of Paradise Valley, just east of Robertson Road, in University Park located north of East Second Street and east of Beverly Street, in the Pratt Additions located just south of East 15<sup>th</sup> bounded by South Beverly Street and South McKinley Street, or the Fort Casper addition north of CY Avenue and west of South Poplar Street. Most of these houses are over fifty (50) years old. These neighborhoods are occupied by low-moderate income persons. Due to age, major housing systems are failing. The City had to cut its owner occupied rehabilitation program because of lower CDBG allocations. However, the City has retained its Emergency Repair Program and its World Changers program. The Emergency Rehabilitation Program has funds set aside to help low-moderate income homeowners to obtain repairs – repairs that if not done, pose an immediate threat to the health and safety of the occupants. The World Changers program uses CDBG funds to purchase the materials and construction assistance to a group of volunteer youth that perform exterior rehabilitation activities on the homes of low-moderate income homeowners. The City partners with World Changers, a program of the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

World Changers is a faith-based organization sponsored by the North American Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention. The City provides materials for exterior rehabilitation, selects homeowners, and supervises the construction activities. World Changers provides the volunteer labor to do the rehabilitation work. This year, the City and World Changers celebrated its thirteenth (13<sup>th</sup>) anniversary of their partnership and completed twenty (20) projects, for a total of 412 homes rehabilitated. The volunteer labor contributed by the 256 World Changers translates into approximately \$81,920 for the year. The City was allocated \$20,000 from the Community Pride and Revitalization Program through Wyoming Community Development Authority to help offset the costs of materials. The youth who travel to Casper and 90 other communities throughout the country volunteer their time and labor to replace/repair roofs, windows, doors, repaint houses, clean yards, construct ramps for accessibility, and fix fences. This work is done in 4 days. When they leave, the worst looking house in the neighborhood is now the best looking house. Finally, other neighbors often make use of the dumpsters to get rid of trash and will do their own repairs.

This year, the City also assisted two nonprofit organizations and LifeSteps Campus with World Changers labor. New windows were added to the addition of the R. L. Mills Home for Boys, a facility that provides long-term foster care for homeless boys. World Changers replaced the windows and doors and painted a single family unit located and operated by Seton House, a transitional housing program for women with children. At LifeSteps Campus, World Changers added handrails to the ramp on Building A and built a dog run for a tenant with disabilities who has a companion dog. The dog run

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allows him to let the dog outside for exercise unsupervised. World Changers rehabilitated the exteriors of fifteen houses. They replaced three (3) roofs, replaced windows in ten (10) units, painted twelve (12) units, installed exterior doors on seven (7) units, replaced storm doors on four (4) units and fixed three (3) fences. This year the City celebrated the completion of its 400<sup>th</sup> house using World Changers' volunteer labor.

This year Emergency Repair funds assisted six (6) homeowners. Repairs included four (4) new hot water heaters, repair one sewer and bury one water meter.

Administering these programs is time intensive. Forty percent (40%) of the salary and benefits for the Housing and Community Development Division secretary and ten percent (10%) of the manager's salary and benefits are charged to the Housing Rehabilitation Assistance Program. The secretary processes all of the applicants for World Changers and the Emergency Repair programs. The manager provides program administration oversight.

The operation of the Housing Rehabilitation Assistance Program also requires the professional assistance of a general contractor who assesses the needs of the housing units, recommends rehabilitation activities, writes project bids, conducts walkthroughs, and oversees project construction. The contractor is paid an hourly fee on "an as needed basis".

Outcome: Neighborhoods have been improved. Low-moderate income homeowners facing emergency repairs without any financial resources were able to get the repairs accomplished quickly and with little financial strain in the monthly budget.

Funds Allocated: \$ 128,115  
Funds Expended: \$ 79,718  
Matching Funds: \$ 97,334 (\$81,920 – World Changers' in-kind labor and \$15,414 – WCDA – Community Revitalization and Pride funds)

### Ethnicity of Persons Served

	<i>Person</i>	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Hispanic</i>
White	19	5
Black/African American	2	
Asian	0	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0	
Other Multi-Racial	0	
<i>Total</i>	<b>21</b>	<b>5</b>

### Income Category

	<i>Person</i>
Extremely Low	9
Low-Moderate	12
<i>Total</i>	<b><i>21</i></b>

## Rental Rehabilitation Program

The Rental Rehabilitation Program (RRP) has had a slow start this fiscal year. Its goal is to improve and retain the quality and quantity of existing affordable multifamily rental housing units located within the core of the community, especially Census Tracts 200 and 300. Program policies and procedures were completed and approved by City Council. In January 2010, the City launched the program. There was some interest; however, no landlord came forward with a viable project. In June another media blitz was conducted and several landlords showed interest in the program. However, they either had single family units or their units were outside the target area (Census Tracts 200 and 300). Since the end of the fiscal year, one landlord has eligible properties located in the targeted area has shown significant interest. The City will continue to market the program. Progress will be reported in the 2011 CAPER.

Funds Allocated: \$ 100,000

Funds Expended: \$ 0

Matching Funds: Landlords must match CDBG loan funds on a one-to-one basis.

## ***ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT***

### **City Core Revitalization Activities**

The marketing piece for the Old Yellowstone District (OYD) states “Casper is always worth a visit for fans of vibrant, walkable, and livable cities. The City continues to develop its riverfront walk paths, extend the ‘rails to trails’ pathway throughout the City, improve the bike lane network and transit network, explore opportunities for art, culture, and recreation, maintain infrastructure, foster neighborhood excellence, and implement smart growth principles in its community development and planning initiatives”. CDBG funds have been the linchpin to redevelopment efforts in the Old Yellowstone District. The City provides the staff support. The Urban Renewal Coordinator works with the public and private sectors to facilitate planning, program oversight and growth for the district.

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Downtown Casper is the true heart of this community; alive with dining, shopping, entertainment, history, art, and culture. Although the main downtown core has gone through metamorphosis from dirt streets and wooden sidewalks in the early days, it has evolved into a modern shopping, entertainment and financial district. In the early 1970's, the area west of Center Street had deteriorated to such a point that Urban Renewal funds from HUD were used to redevelop the area. Adjacent to the downtown core, geographically located just south of West First Street, west of David Street, north of Collins Drive and east of South Poplar Street, the Old Yellowstone District, developed first as a thoroughfare to Yellowstone National Park, and then into a warehouse and heavy industrial area. Many of the buildings fell into disrepair. To complement the downtown area, City leaders created the Old Yellowstone District. The OYD and the downtown area should become a destination to live, work and play.

The Urban Renewal Division for the City of Casper was created to bring public and private investment together in the redevelopment plan for the Old Yellowstone District. The Urban Renewal Division has brought attention to this downtown district, and it will continue to build momentum. Success builds on success and projects are already building on one another. The Urban Renewal Coordinator works directly with developers to create functional and flourishing properties. The City of Casper will continue to provide financial assistance through direct investment into infrastructure and through the facilitation of loan programs to developers and business owners. A variety of financial programs is available.

The following is a summary of activities that were completed in fiscal year 2010 in the City core:

- A 3<sup>rd</sup> fall neighborhood clean-up was completed. The dumpsters were labeled with the specific type of debris that should be deposited in them, in an effort to encourage recycling. The neighborhood complied very well. The total amount of debris collected over the 10-day period was 109,840 pounds.
- Demolition of 2 dangerous buildings in the Weed-n-Seed area - in partnership with Code Enforcement - was carried out with City core funding.
- Tipping fees assisted the following projects/properties:
  - The Ice Factory – former ice storage building (circa 1921) was remodeled into a mixed use facility with two businesses and one residence.
  - Natrona Transfer and Storage – former warehouse (circa 1915) has begun remodel work into 18 lofts.
  - 12-24 Club – relocation to new downtown facility.
  - Houston Supply – clean-up of 5 buildings for resale/redevelopment.
  - Yellowstone Hotel – former boarding house (circa 1923) is being remodeled into 12 flats.
  - Turner-Cottman building (circa 1920's) – owner is cleaning out 3 floors and a basement for a mixed use development.



- A special website was created and is updated regularly: [www.oldyellowstonedistrict.com](http://www.oldyellowstonedistrict.com).
- The new Marketing Publication debuted in April 2010! This beautiful 28-page piece was a “neighborhood contribution” in its content and design. It can be viewed and/or printed from the website, purchased as a high gloss, bound copy from the City of Casper, Urban Renewal Division, or purchased as a CD or jump drive with the file embedded. The marketing publication will be used to showcase the Old Yellowstone District to interested developers, investors, and grant organizations.
- The new retaining wall at Wyo Central Federal Credit Union is beautiful!! The City Council awarded a \$36,000 grant to the credit union to purchase the concrete block for the retaining wall. The grant was authorized through the City’s core revitalization Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, and qualified as an eligible expense under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines. When the retaining wall collapsed after the July 3<sup>rd</sup> flood, public access to the upper and lower parking lots was greatly impacted. City Council acknowledged how critical parking is to the success of downtown Casper. The City worked with the credit union staff and identified the “arrest of severe deterioration” as an eligible CDBG activity.
- Guidelines developed for dumpster and landfill fees waiver.
- Policy developed for Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program.
- Reconstruction of W. Yellowstone Highway through the OYD in partnership with the Wyoming Department of Transportation – 4 block area, with full street amenities.
- Initial development of new loan fund via NMTC.
- Participation in Brownfield grant application programs.

Ongoing activities include:

- Approval and implementation of architect retainer grant program.
- Facilitation of nominations of properties to State Historic Preservation Office.
- Execution of voluntary business relocation requests.
- Provision of assistance with City public services - road and alley patching, street light additions/repairs, use of rotomill and fill dirt to assist drainage issues in public rights-of-way.
- Coordination of grant assistance to fund handicap access upgrades on existing properties.

- Initiation of engineering designs for continuation of Rails-to-Trails pathway through the OYD.
- Exploration of riverfront design options.

Map #7 outlines the designated Old Yellowstone District.

Outcome: This project will be a multi-year project; however, the foundation for a strong program has been established.

<u>Funds Allocated:</u>	\$ 135,000
<u>Funds Expended:</u>	\$ 60,287

### **Other Allowable Costs**

#### **Administration:**

Administration funds were used to pay for staff salary and benefits, and general operations of the Housing and Community Development Division to oversee the progress of the use of Community Development Block Grant funds.

<u>Funds Allocated:</u>	\$ 85,937
<u>Funds Expended:</u>	\$ 85,122

### **Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing**

The State of Wyoming does not have a fair housing office. A statewide fair office was opened in Casper in 2003; however, due to funding and management issues the office closed in 2006. The City of Casper does not receive sufficient funding to operate a fair housing program. Anyone with fair housing issues is referred to HUD's Wyoming Field Office.

On its face, 1999 report is still relevant. The following is a list of the impediments and some updates on activities undertaken to address the problems:

- *Land development costs may be an impediment to fair housing choice.* The costs for a developer to build roads, install utilities, sidewalks and curb and gutters are about one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per running foot. These costs are passed onto the homebuyers.
- *The "Not in My Backyard" (NIMBY) syndrome is an impediment to fair housing location and choice.* As archaic as this condition may be, there are still some folks who are against having low-moderate income housing projects built in their neighborhoods. When the Wyoming National Bank project was developed in

downtown Casper, merchants and residents protested at length. However, when the development was completed the tenants proved to be good neighbors. A small convenience store was opened up on the corner of East Second Street and South Wolcott Street. The store not only created jobs for low-moderate income persons, but also provided necessary items for residents of the building and persons working in the downtown area.

- *A lack of adequate financial resources or the inability to qualify for a home loan based on credit history is an impediment to fair housing choice.* With the current economy, it is even more difficult for persons with “stained credit” to obtain financing.
- *The loss of HUD contracts for existing housing may result in displacement of those residing in these units and may be an impediment to fair housing choice.* The City has not lost any HUD contracts.
- *Lack of affordable housing units, particularly for very low and low-income households, large families with children, seniors and persons with disabilities are impediments to fair housing choice.* Casper is building its housing inventory of low-moderate income units. As soon as a new project is completed, the units are filled and a waiting list is established. Landlords have not significantly lowered rent rates in market rate units. There are a few new market rate complexes under construction. When they are completed, low-moderate income persons may see the cost of housing dip due to the higher inventory of available units.
- *The lack of transitional housing units, particularly for homeless families, is an impediment to fair housing choice.* Since the report was done in 1999, Turning Point (transitional housing for victims of domestic violence), the LifeSteps Transitional Housing Program, additional units at Mother Seton House and some transitional housing units for women at the Central Wyoming Rescue Mission have added to the inventory of transitional housing units in the community. Still, these organizations have waiting lists.
- *Low income (or wage) levels are an impediment to fair housing choice.* Unless an individual has post-secondary education or is working in the mines or oilfield, the only available jobs are service or retail based.
- *A lack of information regarding manufactured and mobile home requirements may be an impediment to fair housing choice.* The lack of information is really not an impediment to fair housing choices. Rather, there have not been any mobile home parks constructed in over twenty (20) years. The spaces are full and until more spaces are created, mobile homes as a housing choice are very limited.
- *The lack of incentives for rehabilitating second floor apartments in downtown buildings is an impediment to fair housing.* The economics of developing second floor urban apartments is expensive. The work involves demolition of existing

interiors, architectural plans, engineering studies, and replacement of all major housing systems. Access to units drives up construction costs. Only a few persons have rehabilitated second floor apartments in the downtown area. These households are NOT low-moderate income.

- *Potential discrimination by landlords based on race or ethnicity.* The City does not get any complaints from anyone regarding discrimination based on race or ethnicity. That doesn't mean discrimination doesn't happen in Casper, it does.

In reviewing these impediments, there are many factors related to the impediments that are out of the control of the City. Market and demand drive the costs of land. Lack of education about fair housing issues in Wyoming lends itself to the perpetuation of the NIMBY, or "not in my back yard" attitudes.

Renters need to be educated to recognize and report all types of discrimination for all of the protected classes. During housing shortages, renters are even more hesitant to make any derogatory reports as they fear losing their housing and finding a new housing situation is difficult. Most renters are not aware of fair housing laws and, unless the landlord has federal funding tied into the rental unit the landlord does not know about fair housing issues either. In the past decade, perhaps there have only been only a handful of contacts from renters to the Housing and Community Development (H&CD) office. Most calls are related to landlord/tenant issues such as housing conditions, refund of deposits, and lack of maintenance. Outreach educational efforts to tenants and landlords will provide both parties with knowledge of fair housing issues. The H&CD office will incorporate such a strategy in its new analysis of impediments.

HUD reviewed the City's administration of the CDBG program. HUD stated that it is concerned that the City has not updated the Analysis of Impediments (AI). The City is aware that an update of its AI is needed. This past year, the H&CD staff had to focus its time and efforts to get American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds expended. The ARRA program required additional staff time, time that had been allocated to completing an updated AI prior to the end of the 2009 calendar year. The H&CD office has 1.5 full time employees. The City understands its obligations to update its AI and this task **will be completed** by December, 2010.

## Other Actions

The City of Casper does not receive enough funding in its Community Development Block Grant to have any great impact on reducing the number of poverty level families. The City can, however, help increase the capacity of those agencies that support these families in providing better transportation, child care, services for elderly and disabled persons, and housing rehabilitation.

### **Leveraging Resources**

CDBG funds are used to leverage additional funds to complete major projects. For example, in this fiscal year, the City of Casper and its sub-recipient leveraged additional funds from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), program income from activities, volunteer labor, the City's general fund and the state housing finance agency. Operational costs for the dial-a-ride system and the fixed route bus system exceed the amount of income in the fare box. Because CDBG funds provide ridership tickets, Casper Area Transportation Coalition uses CDBG funds for the 20% match required by FTA. During this fiscal year, \$1,292,801 was leveraged. World Changers provided volunteer labor that could be valued at \$81,920 and the state housing finance agency contributed \$15,414 towards material costs for World Changers.

The City of Casper also provides additional financial support for efforts such as the redevelopment of the Old Yellowstone District, the Weed and Seed program, code enforcement, and law enforcement. The community as a whole is a giving community inasmuch as its local foundations and United Way of Natrona County provide additional funding to social service agencies. Without the support of the local foundations, United Way and private donors, low-moderate income persons, especially those with great needs, would not have access to the many services to assist with transportation, senior care, child care and recreation.

### **Managing the Process**

The City of Casper takes its responsibility of administering its CDBG entitlement very seriously. The community relies on the City to ensure all funds allocated and spent meet community needs, based upon public input. Steps are taken to assure equal consideration of all requests with prudent stewardship guiding all funding decisions.

CDBG funds were used exclusively to meet one of the three national objectives, and the City complied with the overall benefit certification. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of CDBG funds benefited low-moderate income persons. In FY 09/10, CDBG funds benefited low-moderate income homeowners, victims of domestic violence, youth at risk, persons and families who are homeless, elderly persons, disabled persons, low-moderate income persons without personal transportation and low-moderate income neighborhoods.

### **Citizen Participation**

The City of Casper provided copies of the draft of the Consolidated Annual Plan Evaluation Report to the public by placing copies of the plan at the Community Action Partnership of Natrona County, Wyoming Community Development Authority (the state housing finance agency), the public library, the Wyoming state HUD office, the Casper Housing Authority and the Housing and Community Development office. In addition,

copies of the plan were also electronically transmitted to key social service agencies and CDBG sub-recipients. A fifteen (15) day comment period was September 12 through September 27. Finally, City Council held a public hearing to solicit comments from the public at its September 21, 2010 meeting. **Insert comments here.**

### **Institutional Structure**

The City of Casper works with a number of agencies, both public and nonprofit in nature, to deliver community development and housing services to citizens of Casper. Because the City receives such a small allocation of CDBG funds, typically economic development activities have not been funded. However, the past three years, the City has made CDBG funds available to prepare and facilitate economic development in Census Tracts 200 and 300, where over 20% of the total population lives in poverty. Higher paying jobs are the best ammunition in the fight against poverty. An organized economic development effort is our best chance to create livable wage positions. Business recruitment for other areas of the City is handled by the Casper Area Economic Development Agency (CAEDA). CAEDA receives Optional One Cent Sales Tax revenue for its operating budget. There is an economic development joint powers board that administers all funds for CAEDA. The board consists of two City council members, two county commissioners and an at-large representative.

When the City completed a public/private partnership with local developers to redevelop Old Fire Station #1, it did not realize the impact this project would have in and beyond its city limits. The project is a shining example of how the local governments can partner with private business developers to facilitate redevelopment. As a result, a local nonprofit organization and a privately owned business may utilize the Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program. The City has about \$1.6 million dollars loan ability. It is anticipated these loans will be closed by the end of the next reporting period. Other businesses are looking at the façade improvement loan and economic development assistance loan programs as viable options to improve properties and to create jobs for low-moderate income persons. The success of the Old Fire Station #1 project has had far reaching influence on projects located in other parts of the county. It was the first project in the country that married the use of New Market Tax Credits and Section 108 Loan Guarantee program funds. As a result, other projects in the country have been financed using the same financial strategies as the Old Fire Station #1 project. Thus, additional jobs have been created for low-moderate income persons...jobs that would not have been created had the owners of the Old Fire Station #1 project and the City of Casper not taken the necessary risks to bring the program to realization.

The City participates in the local regional homeless collaborative and the Housing and Community Development Division Manager is the president of the statewide homeless collaborative that oversees the Continuum of Care process. The organization struggles with many issues. Some issues are organizational focus, service delivery systems and resource utilization.



The City does not receive a sufficient amount of CDBG funds to address all of the community needs; however, CDBG funds can facilitate change. As an example, the City is now a designated “Weed and Seed” community by the Department of Justice. Over a period of five (5) years, the City will receive about \$1 million dollars for “weeding and seeding” activities in designated areas. CDBG funds leveraged an additional \$15,414 from the state housing finance agency to help offset material costs for World Changers projects. CDBG funds were used to provide dumpsters; roll offs, tipping fees and graffiti removal for low-moderate income persons in these areas.

### **Monitoring**

The City of Casper monitors the efforts and expenditures of all of its projects. The City is the recipient of all of the CDBG funds allocated other than the Casper Area Transportation Coalition that receives funds to purchase bus and dial-a-ride tickets for low-moderate income persons. CATC provides semi-annual reports on persons served and monitors the expenditures to ensure that funds are spent for the activities approved in the Annual Action Plan. Each year the Housing and Community Development Division is included in the City’s single audit process.

### **Self Evaluation**

The community is on the “right track” in terms developing Casper as a viable community by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities for its low-moderate income citizens, and all citizens in general.

The City is preserving existing housing stock for its low-moderate income homeowners through its Emergency Repair and World Changers programs. The City is compliant with the Lead Safe Housing Regulation so its youngest citizens can be protected from the hazards of lead based paint. Casper is not a large metropolitan area; however it does face some problems of the “big city”. Housing costs continue to rise and wages are not keeping up with the economic growth. Very low income citizens are struggling to meet the basic needs of life.

This past year, the City has made great progress in terms of meeting its goals of the Five Year Consolidated Plan. The following is a list of accomplishments:

- 265 elderly and disabled persons in the community received Casper Area Transportation Coalition (CATC) tickets for transportation to medical, educational, recreational, and employment destinations.
- Homeless persons received tickets for CATC transportation to medical facilities or social service agencies in the community.
- The fixed route transit system continues to be a primary community amenity by providing a total of 125,549 rides on The Bus and 54,213 rides on the Casper Area Transportation Coalition dial-a-ride service.



- The City completed its 407th house through the World Changers Program. A total of twenty one (21) projects were completed.
- World Changers replaced windows on the R. L. Mills Home, painted and replaced windows and doors on a single-family housing unit that is a part of the Seton House Campus, constructed a ramp on Building A on the LifeSteps Campus, built a dog run at Building B (also on LifeSteps Campus) for a disabled tenant's companion, and rehabilitated the exteriors of fifteen (15) homes.
- Four (4) homeowners had emergency repairs performed on their homes to address issues that posed an immediate threat to the health and safety of the residents.
- Five (5) blighted properties were demolished.
- One hundred one (101) homeowners in low-moderate income areas were provided dumpsters or roll offs and tipping fees to clean up their houses and yards. Over 330 tons of trash and debris was removed.
- A local church sponsored two (2) neighborhood cleanup days for North Casper where CDBG funds paid for dumpsters and bale fill fees.
- Fall neighborhood cleanup efforts in Old Yellowstone District used CDBG funds to place dumpsters throughout the neighborhood and to pay for tipping fees. Seventy seven (77) homeowners and businesses utilized the dumpsters.
- A new door was added to the 12<sup>th</sup> Street Clinic entrance on LifeSteps Campus to provide additional patient privacy and security.
- Locks were replaced on the Early Head Start program areas in the LifeSteps Campus facility.
- The City continues to manage LifeSteps Campus, a 6.5 acre, multi-building social service Campus.
- Paid one-half of salary for a code enforcement officer assigned to the "Weed and Seed" area.
- Policies and procedures for Rental Rehabilitation program were completed. The program was publicized; however, no landlords have yet taken advantage of the funding opportunity.
- Re-keyed most of LifeSteps Campus facilities to control accessibility by City staff, tenants and clients.
- Work was completed in a local assessment district in Fort Casper. Applications were taken from low-moderate income homeowners to establish a waiting list to make assessment payments on their behalf in the next fiscal year.

Organizations provide a wide range of services to help meet the needs of homeless persons/families, addictions, mental health, education, job training, and employment. The agencies seek funds from a wide range of sources to provide critical services. The elderly, disabled, victims of domestic violence, children at risk, daycare facilities, community recreational programs, and HIV/AIDS and youth programs are all recipients of the same kind of support from the community. All of the programs are designed to enable persons to live with dignity and independence.

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The City works hard to provide a suitable living environment for all its citizens. Its public safety protection agencies all work in a concerted effort to preserve the health and safety of the community. The quality of life in the City of Casper and its surrounding area is especially important to its residents. The community as a whole coordinates to ensure that the treasured lifestyle of the citizens is maintained. Casper is still somewhat “small-town USA” and neighbors look out for each other.

The community also treasures its rich history and steps have been and are being taken to preserve that history. Buildings of significant historical value are being preserved for future generations. The National Historical Trails Center provides a living history of the value of the six (6) historical trails that cross the Casper area and the role this area played in the development of our country.

Over the past few years, the area north of I-25, also known as the North Casper area, has undergone significant changes and improvement. This area was the initial site of the City when it was first founded in 1889 and some of Casper’s first homes were built in this area. However, because of the natural division of the City by the railroad, and later the interstate highway, the area deteriorated. Through patient code enforcement, the building of neighborhood pride, the infusion of CDBG dollars into housing rehabilitation, the relocation and subsequent renovation of fourteen (14) HOPE III homes, this part of Casper is no longer an eyesore. Many of the small modest homes are well kept, the streets and alleys are clean, and people who live in North Casper are proud to be from that part of town. There are still some pockets of decay, however.

Winter Memorial Presbyterian Church is a small church in North Casper. They have initiated, and held neighborhood cleanups for the past three (3) years. CDBG funds were used to provide dumpsters and pay tipping fees. Code Enforcement, the Police Department and the Housing and Community Development Division (H&CD) participated.

As the City reviews its visions and goals for the Five Year Consolidated Plan period of July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2010, the City has made great strides in addressing its community development issues. Many of the projects are multi-year projects so progress, not results, will be reported in future reports. The Bus continues to be a primary mode of transportation for persons who do not have their own private transportation. The Bus moves people to employment, medical appointments, shopping and social events and now service has expanded into neighboring communities. The community’s designation as a “Weed and Seed” community has resulted in cleaning up the core of the community – the neighborhoods where low-moderate income persons live. Despite the economic downturn, commercial development continues. As construction progresses, the City has a new junior high school, a new elementary school, several new restaurants, a ten-screen movie theater, redevelopment of the old Odd Fellows Building in the downtown and a fitness center. Work continues on several projects in the Old Yellowstone District. World Changers has completed over 400 houses. New affordable housing units will be constructed in the downtown area. One will replace the condemned KC Apartments and the other project will be located on a longtime vacant lot on 5<sup>th</sup> and South Wolcott Streets. CDBG funds will assist with the demolition and clearance of the KC Apartments’ site. Needed repairs at

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LifeSteps Campus are continuing so LifeSteps Campus is a viable option for persons difficult to house in traditional neighborhoods and providing a central place to deliver and receive services.

In summary, the City of Casper is on target with its visions and goals.

### Lead-based Paint

The City of Casper is in full compliance with the Lead Safe Housing Regulation. When rehabilitation involves the disturbance of lead based paint, only contractors who have been trained in Safe Work Practices are allowed to bid on the project. The City will not do projects where the costs will exceed \$25,000. The City does not have the resources available to undertake projects of this scope and still comply with the regulations.

## HOUSING

### Housing Needs

In the past three to five years, Casper has been experiencing somewhat of an economic boom. The boom brought jobs and people to Casper. Housing construction rates climbed to numbers not seen since the early 1980's. BUT, the housing stock constructed is not affordable to low-moderate income persons. The prices of existing homes skyrocketed to more than double their value at the beginning of the decade. The table below is a comparison of real estate market trends at the end of June of each year for the past four years.

#### Casper Real Estate Market Trends

Date	Active June 1st	Listed	Average List Price	Under Contract	Sold	Average Sold Price	Median Sold Price	Sold/List %	Avg Days on Mkt
6/1/2007	227	38	\$ 253,295	31	33	\$ 225,464	\$ 203,000	99%	91
6/1/2008	416	198	\$ 255,158	90	105	\$ 218,352	\$ 188,750	96%	84
6/1/2009	362	140	\$ 223,046	12	77	\$ 215,161	\$ 183,100	93%	139
6/1/2010	302	145	\$ 217,506	28	98	\$ 230,219	\$ 184,500	93%	95
AVERAGE	327	130	\$ 237,251	40	78	\$ 222,299	\$ 189,838	95%	102

The average listing price has dropped sixteen percent (16%) since 2007. However, the average sold price has realized some two percent (2%) increase and the median sold price

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has begun an upward trend again. The number of days on the market in 2010 is still higher than 2007, but forty four (44) days less than 2009.

For low-moderate income households anticipating homeownership, the cost of housing is unaffordable to them. Occasionally housing stock priced under \$200,000 comes onto the market. If its condition is good to excellent, its time on the real estate market is short. Qualified buyers are poised to make immediate offers. Casper's greatest inventory of affordable housing is located in low-moderate income neighborhoods. Over 89% of Casper's existing housing stock was constructed prior to 1980. Casper, as a "boom or bust" community experiences bursts in housing construction during its boom times – to provide housing for its work force. Due to age, many of the homes constructed during the last boom have failing major systems.

The City uses CDBG funds to provide low interest or no interest rate loans to homeowners for rehabilitation. The Housing Rehabilitation Assistance Program consists of two (2) different rehabilitation programs: emergency rehabilitation to make repairs to conditions that poses an immediate threat to the health and safety of the occupants; and the World Changers Program – a partnership with the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention to get exterior repairs completed. Priority is given to persons who live on fixed incomes, are elderly or disabled and/or live in Census Tracts 200 and 300. Thirteen (13) of the twenty-one (21) World Changers projects were located in the Weed and Seed area. Because the City doesn't receive a large amount of CDBG funds, the use of Housing Rehabilitation Assistance Program funds are limited to low-moderate homeowners only.

The economic downturn has put more homes on the market. However, the lower priced homes are selling quickly but the higher cost homes remain on the real estate market for longer periods of time. New construction in neighboring Evansville of about 230 single family homes does provide an option for first time homebuyers that want new construction. These homes are priced at or below \$200,000. The Wyoming Community Development Authority (WCDA), the state housing finance agency continues to assist first time homebuyers with mortgages, down payment assistance and rehabilitation funds through its "Spruce Up Wyoming" Program.

There are several market rate multi-family units under construction. When these units are completed, there should be a shift of people moving from the older rental stock into brand new apartments. The new units will also soften the rental market that should result in higher vacancy rates and lower rents. In essence, low-moderate income persons should be able to take advantage of this market shift and secure decent affordable rental housing.

There are two more low income housing tax credits projects that will be constructed in the downtown area. Steve Grimshaw, the developer of the former Wyoming National Bank into affordable rental units is now going to build both projects. The first project will involve the demolition of the former KC Apartments on East Collins Drive and South Kimball Street. Due to major health and safety issues, the complex was

closed by the City. Fortunately, stimulus funds under the Rapid Re-housing Program were available through the Community Action Partnership of Natrona County and Interfaith of Natrona County. Residents were able to receive assistance. The owner had to correct the deficiencies; however, after a six month period, he put the property on the market. Mr. Grimshaw will have the existing buildings demolished and will construct a new apartment complex on the site. He will also construct another complex on East Collins Drive and South Wolcott. These two affordable housing projects will allow residents access to the many services available in the downtown area.

### **Specific Housing Objectives**

Habitat for Humanity completed three (3) more properties this past year. CDBG funds were used to help pay the tap fees on a North Casper property. One project was a single family home and the remaining two units were a duplex on St. John Street in North Casper. The single family home was built in the same block where the City rehabilitated two single family units with HOPE III funds in 2001. There is another Habitat for Humanity house also located on the same block. In total, the organization has completed twenty-six (26) housing units. There has been some personnel changes, but one more unit is in the planning stages. Habitat also has opened up a ReStore on West Collins Drive. The organization takes donations of construction materials and resells them.

As a part of its emergency repair program, the City makes funds available to low-moderate income homeowners that have become disabled. Emergency repair funds are used to construct a ramp for accessibility to a home by a person with disabilities. There are not a sufficient amount of CDBG funds available to make any further accommodations inside a home of a person with disabilities. Referrals for this type of assistance must come from the Wyoming Independent Living Rehabilitation (WILR), a nonprofit organization that works closely with persons with disabilities.

The City does not receive any HOME funds, so no accomplishments can be reported regarding providing affordable housing that meets Section 215 requirements.

On LifeSteps Campus there are eight (8) apartments set aside as affordable rentals. The City contracted with Housing Alternatives, a nonprofit organization that works with persons who need affordable rentals. The organization is going through a dissolution process at this time. The City is working with the Wyoming Housing Network to assume management of the eight units. The remaining rental properties held by the organization will be managed by Wyoming Housing Network as well. Thus, all of the units will be retained as affordable housing.

### **Public Housing Strategy**

The Casper Housing Authority (CHA) operates 75 units of public housing for persons who earn at or below 50% of area median income and is authorized 498 Section

8 Housing Vouchers. Even with the increase in rent payment capacity, the Housing Authority still has a long waiting list of people seeking housing. The CHA is not designated as a “troubled housing authority” by HUD.

### **Barriers to Affordable Housing**

Barriers to affordable housing in Casper continue to pose serious issues such as the high costs of purchasing raw land and constructing the necessary infrastructure. The old game of supply versus demand means increases in construction materials, labor costs and infrastructure. There has been a slow down in the construction of the larger homes. Fewer developers are building “spec homes”. The sudden drop in oil prices has slowed the oil and gas production significantly. Exploration of coalbed methane gas has slowed down. However, now there is a lot of potential oil play in southeastern Wyoming and the development of the Niobrara Shale. The oilfield also extends into the Casper area. So, as this oil exploration activity picks up pace, it is expected that Casper will also have some positive economic impact. Oil and gas production has always been the driving force for employment in Wyoming and in Casper. According to the State of Wyoming, Oil and Gas Commission, 3.65 supporting jobs are created for each oil and gas job created. The industry is very closely linked to the economy of Casper and as that industry goes, so does Casper. Wind energy development is also contributing to job creation. A wind farm is being planned for an area just north of Casper. If the plan comes to fruition, Casper will see more positive economic impact. True to its history, the fulcrum of Casper’s economy maintains a close balance of jobs created and jobs lost.

### **HOME/ American Dream Down Payment Initiative (ADDI)**

This program is administered by the state housing finance agency, Wyoming Community Development Authority.



## HOMELESS

### Homeless Needs

The actual number of homeless persons in Casper is unknown. Casper has one emergency shelter (Central Wyoming Rescue Mission) and one transitional housing program for families (Community Action Partnership of Natrona County). Seton House provides transitional housing for women with children. The Central Wyoming Rescue Mission also operates a faith based transitional housing program for women with children and one for single men. The Self Help Center has emergency shelter for victims of domestic violence and a transitional housing program for their target population. Still, these agencies have waiting lists. It is not known how many families are living doubled up with friends or family. The Natrona County School District works with homeless youth (some of which are served through the above programs). Other than the Youth Crisis Center, there is no emergency shelter for homeless youth. It is reported that many of them live with friends and “couch surf”. Like many other communities, somewhat rural in nature, the number of homeless persons is a fluid number. Wyoming’s winters are not conducive to persons migrating into town without a place to stay.

The City worked with the Regional Homeless Collaborative to have a point in time count on January 21, 2010. The Wyoming Homeless Collaborative manages the statewide point in time count. In order to obtain a more accurate count, the collaborative decided only to count persons utilizing shelter. Still some agencies were confused about how many beds to count. Some added in the extra beds that could be available if conditions dictated such. The collaborative worked with participating agencies to clarify their reports. The participating agencies know the importance of accurate reporting. Last year the collaborative had a special approval to count homeless on the third Thursday in March. On that date, 289 were reported as homeless; however, this year 255 were reported as homeless. The difference may be due to the time of the year that the count is taken. Severe weather conditions in January in Wyoming may deter many homeless persons from migrating to Wyoming.

Last year, Seton House added four (4) new transitional housing units to its campus. Seton House submitted an application through the Continuum of Care grant process. However, its proposed program expansion was not funded. Seton House has housing for twenty-eight (28) families.

The Self-Help Center provides transitional housing for victims of domestic violence through its “Turning Point” program. Last September the center moved its transitional housing from LifeSteps Campus to a former bed and breakfast near Natrona County High School. The move did result in a loss of four (4) rooms and ten (10) beds. The Self-Help Center also operates a separate emergency shelter for victims of domestic violence.



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The Community Action Partnership of Natrona County (CAPNC) operates a transitional housing program for families in Building E of LifeSteps Campus. The program's operations were switched from the Casper Housing Authority to CAPNC about four (4) years ago. This program also has a waiting list of families seeking assistance. By re-purposing some vacant space, the City facilitated the program's growth to its original capacity of ten (10) families. The program is funded by Continuum of Care (CoC) monies.

In the 2009 funding cycle for Continuum of Care funds, the requested renewal applications for the LifeSteps Transitional Housing Program, the Homeless Management Information (HMIS) project and a new application from Seton House were submitted as a part of the statewide application. The Transitional Housing program received \$112,455. The HMIS project received \$66,666 but Seton House's application was not funded.

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) has been a difficult project to initiate. In Casper, Seton House, LifeSteps Campus, the Rescue Mission and Interfaith are on line. Comea House in Cheyenne is also on line. In 2007, Wyoming Rural Development Council (RDC) assumed management of the HMIS and the Continuum of Care application process. A board of directors, consisting of members from the six different regions of the state oversee the RDC management of the process. The Housing and Community Development Manager for the City serves as the state chair. Under RDC's leadership, the Wyoming Homeless Collaborative has an established organizational structure, timetables, governance, and strategic planning. Systems are in place to ensure a smooth SuperNOFA application process. The quality of Wyoming's application has improved significantly and has yielded the highest amount of Continuum of Care funding to the state. Although new programs have not been funded, at least core programs are in place in Casper and Gillette have retained their funding levels.

Due to the award of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) the City had to defer its work on a plan to end chronic homelessness. Although the Ten Year Plan has been given a lesser priority, the plan development is still on the City's list of projects to be completed.

Medical care is provided to persons who are homeless or have been homeless in the past twelve months. The 12<sup>th</sup> Street Clinic is located in Building E at LifeSteps Campus. CDBG funds were used to create a doorway from the waiting area to the patient area, thus providing necessary confidentiality for patients. CDBG funds also provided privacy in three offices that will be used for the social services component of the clinic.

Interfaith of Natrona County provides homeless assistance services to intact families. The agency provides rental deposits and rent or mortgage assistance to families that are in danger of losing their housing. The organization also assist persons with obtaining prescriptions, birth certificates, and personal care items.

Key players in the service delivery system for homeless persons are the Central Wyoming Rescue Mission, Seton House, Interfaith, the Community Action Partnership of Natrona County, Self Help Center, and the Casper Housing Authority. However, one cannot forget services provided by other key agencies in the community. The Salvation Army, Joshua's Food Bank, Holy Cross Food Bank, St. Vincent's Thrift Shop, the First Methodist Thrift Shop, Casper College Adult Basic Education, Even Start, and Early Head Start also provided needed services such as food, clothing, training and child care.

LifeSteps Campus is a group of buildings situated on a 6.5 acre Campus. The land and the buildings are owned by the City of Casper. Situated close to the City-owned cemetery, the State of Wyoming returned ownership of the property to the City when the State closed the Youth Treatment Center in the early 1990's. After requesting proposals, the Casper Housing Authority was awarded the lease to establish a "one-stop shop" for services for persons/families that were homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The Housing Authority secured grants and loans to begin the rehabilitation of the then nearly fifty year old buildings. In November 2006, the Housing Authority returned Campus management to the City. The Housing and Community Development Division assumed management responsibilities and moved its office from City Hall to the lower level of Building F.

LifeSteps Campus is home to several organizations: the Casper Housing Authority – housing vouchers and public housing services for persons who earn at or below 50% of area median income; 12<sup>th</sup> Street Clinic (Health Care for the Homeless) – medical care for persons who are homeless or have been homeless in the past year; Community Action Partnership of Natrona County – transitional housing for families and operates the 12<sup>th</sup> Street Clinic; Casper College ABE/GED – adult basic education and general education diploma educational services to residents; Even Start – classes for English as a Second Language and general education diploma services; and Eagle Ability Services – group housing and day hab services for persons with developmental disabilities or acquired brain injury; and Early Head Start – child care. Finally, The Bus has a bus stop on the Campus to facilitate the transportation needs of persons living on the Campus or coming to the Campus for services.

### **Specific Homeless Prevention Elements**

Keeping a family in their own home is the best prevention method of homelessness. Interfaith of Natrona County, Inc. (Interfaith) provides rental, mortgage and rent deposit assistance to low-moderate income persons. The Community Action Partnership of Natrona County and the Self Help Center (on behalf of service providers in The HOPE Center) received homeless prevention funds. The Self Help Center's funding was later transferred to Interfaith of Natrona County as the Self Help Center had no director. The Rapid Re-housing Program funds were especially helpful to the former residents of the KC Apartments. The apartment complex was closed down by the City because of serious health and safety deficiencies. Most of the residents were able to locate other housing and some used the Rapid Re-housing funds to get into new housing.

### **Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG)**

This program is administered by the state housing finance agency, Wyoming Community Development Authority.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### **Community Development**

One hundred percent (100%) of persons who received benefits of CDBG funds were below 80% of area median income, or considered as low-moderate income. Although the City will support affordable housing programs, the City did not construct any specific housing units.

The Consolidated Plan is developed through a community process and none of its components are the result of willful inaction. An activity such as the development of the fixed route transit system is an excellent example of the power of the Five Year Plan. In that manner, the problem was identified by the community, determined as a major need, resources were explored, a needs assessment was completed, and a plan was implemented to bring buses to the streets of Casper and to provide transportation to persons who do not have personal transportation. All of the sub-recipients had to identify how CDBG funds would leverage additional funds to make a project a reality.

When an entity requested a certificate of consistency with the Five Year Consolidated Plan, the entity was provided with a copy of the plan and submitted a completed application for a certificate of consistency. The Five Year Consolidated Plan is then reviewed by staff to ensure that the proposed activity meets one of the visions of the Consolidated Plan. The Community Development Director issues the Certificate.

All CDBG funds were used to meet at least ONE national objective. The City will not fund any projects that do not meet at least one national objective, is an ineligible activity, or does not support at least the continued achievement of meeting at least one of the City's visions.

The City does not receive a sufficient amount of funds to proceed with any project that requires displacement or relocation. The City did not acquire, rehabilitate or demolish any property that was occupied and therefore no action utilizing the Uniform Relocation Act or Section 104 (d) of the 1974 Community Development Act, as amended, was required.

ALL of the projects funded with CDBG funds had to benefit low-moderate income persons, whether the persons were included in a Low/Mod Limited-Clientele activity or not. The City funded the Casper Area Transportation Coalition where the recipients were presumed limited clientele and incomes were not verified.

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Program income was earned and entered into the Integrated Disbursement Information System (IDIS). Program income comes from rental rehabilitation loans and owner occupied rehabilitation loans that have been paid back to the City. The rental rehabilitation loans were disbursed some years ago, and are being paid back on a regular basis. The owner occupied loans for the regular rehabilitation activities as well as emergency repairs have a stipulation for the homeowner when the loans are granted. If the homeowner changes the title in any manner, including refinancing, the loan must be paid back to the City.

Earned program income is used to pay immediate CDBG expenditures, and the CDBG funds that go unspent are directed towards the availability of funds for the following year and/or to address an immediate community need. No program income was received as the result of any sales of properties or any float funded activity. In addition, there were no prior period adjustments made.

In the history of the City operating its owner occupied rehabilitation programs, only one (1) loan has gone into default. However, there are several homeowners that are significantly behind in their required mortgage payments for owner occupied programs. Some of these loans have been written off by the bank, but the City maintains its position on the mortgage so the funds will still be paid back should the homeowner sell or re-finance their home. The City doesn't own any property that it has purchased with CDBG funds and the City does not have any lump sum agreements.

In November 2006, the City received approval for the Section 108 Loan Guarantee program. The City has a lending capacity of \$1,665,580. Policies and procedures have been approved by City Council; however, there have been no "takers" on the low interest rate 108 loans. In FY09, Council approved raising the \$100,000 loan limit to \$300,000. There are two potential projects that are considering the Section 108 funds as a financing tool. It is the intent of the City to use all of its borrowing power by the November 2011 deadline.

Child care was noted as one of the most important community issues to be addressed over the next five years. The City's economic growth has slowed down somewhat. As reported last year, the lack of licensed child care is an impediment to employment opportunities for single parents. It is difficult for parents working non-traditional hours, to find reliable and affordable childcare. The Wyoming Department of Family Services (DFS) lists 132 licensed child care facilities in Casper. Only a few facilities offer services for parents that may work mid-night or early morning shifts.

Child care capacity can be increased by increasing the subsidy for low income families for child care. Through the State Department of Family Services, the subsidy will be paid directly to the child care provider for families earning at or below 185% of poverty. The legislature increased the eligibility for assistance from 165% of poverty. It is expected that the increase in the subsidy will create additional space, especially for infant and toddler care. This strategy assists those families most unable to pay for quality

child care. These are the low-moderate income families that often work in the service and retail industries where wages are significantly lower and there are no benefits.

The quality of child care is administered by the State Department of Work Force Services. Educational grants are available to individuals who choose to obtain further education in childhood development. Certification programs as well as two year and four year degrees are available through the University of Wyoming and the community colleges. The grants available are \$1,000 per semester financial assistance for a credit bearing course, whether the course will lead to a college degree or a certification. Continuing education helps professionals keep abreast of changes in the field and hones skills. To encourage continuing education, the Department of Work Force Services also provides \$1,000 per year for continuing education. The only way to achieve quality care is through education.

The Child Development Center of Natrona County provides early childhood development screenings, physical, occupational and speech therapy to any child that has a disability. The increased need for their services meant increasing physical space for classroom training and therapy services. The program provides early childhood screening for all children under the age of five. In addition, they also are required to provide therapy services (occupational, speech and physical), at no cost, to affected children.

The City has not been directly involved in any activities that may address child care services. On a statewide basis, the Wyoming Children's Action Alliance, located in Cheyenne, led the legislative effort that increased capacity and quality of child care in Wyoming.

### **Antipoverty Strategy**

The City of Casper does not receive enough funding in its Community Development Block Grant to have any great impact on reducing the number of poverty level families. However, the City can assist these families to achieve a higher quality of life by helping agencies that work with this population group the capacity to provide better services such as transportation, childcare, services for elderly and disabled, rehabilitating their homes, as well as building and developing collaborative efforts to stretch their program dollars further and planning for future growth and development.

## NON-HOMELESS SPECIAL NEEDS

### **Non-homeless Special Needs**

No actions were taken by the City to address special needs of persons that are not homeless but require supportive housing.

### **Specific HOPWA Objectives**

The City does not administer any HOPWA funds.

### OTHER NARRATIVE

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) was signed into law in February, 2009. From this bill, the City of Casper was notified that it would receive \$119,192 in Community Development Block Grant-Recovery (CDBG-R) funds. Almost concurrent with this funding notification, the City was examining the continued viability of the fire suppression system in Building E of LifeSteps Campus. The unit had been installed twelve (12) years ago. However, the system is not environmentally friendly (attic pipes) and poor preventative maintenance over the years led to an evaluation of the system. Fire suppression professionals replaced two home-style compressors with a commercial grade compressor to keep the system on line. Inspection of the piping system showed significant buildup of rust and other materials that could impede the system's effectiveness. The City was looking at what steps it could take to ensure the safety of the tenants of the building.

Through the substantial amendment process, the City submitted its application to HUD to use the CDBG-R funds to replace the fire suppression system. The City will also use general funds to support the activity. HUD approved the amendment and a funding agreement was received August 10, 2009. In January, 2010, Rapid Fire Protection Services received the bid to replace the system. Their bid was \$55,600. The job was completed by June 1, 2010. Additional work had to be completed in order to finish the job. The City is in the advertising phase for final payment and final payment is expected to be made by October 31, 2010.

The City still has a balance of \$62,592 of ARRA funds to be committed. A portion of the remaining funds will be used to repair the holes in the ceilings and walls made to get access to piping. The City will then evaluate how much ARRA funds remain after that project to determine how the balance will be expended.